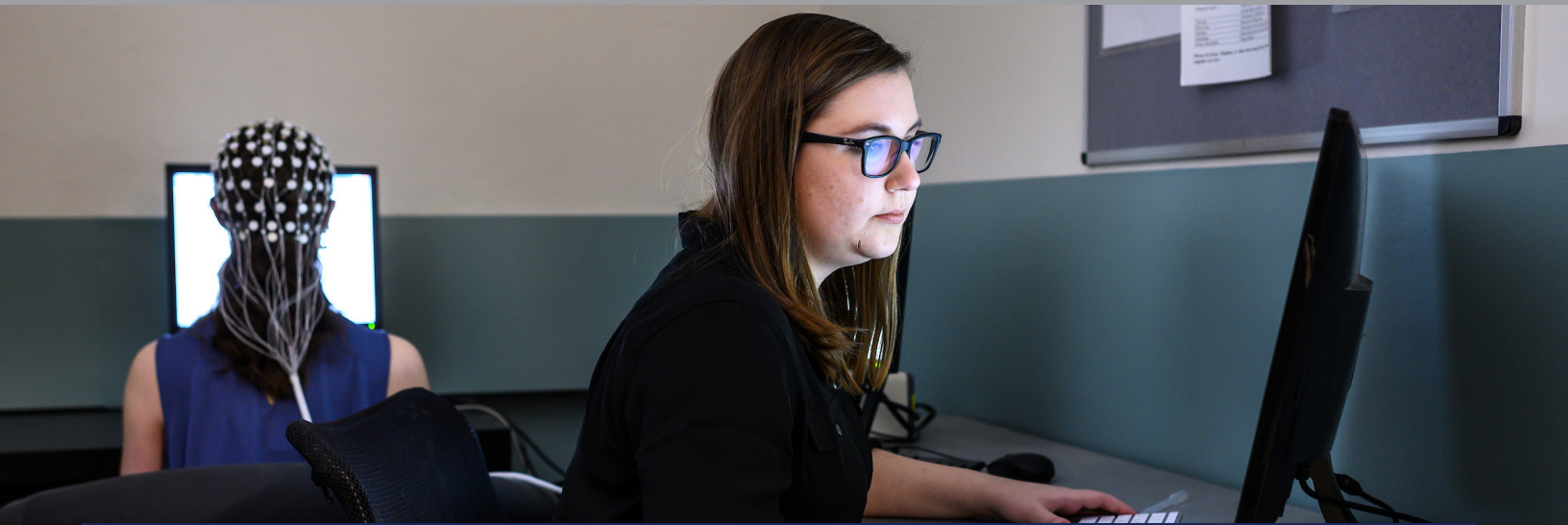




GRADUATE STUDIES

Psychology



JOIN OUR COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARSHIP AND RESEARCH

Based in the Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences at Villanova University, the Master of Science in Psychology program provides a strong foundation for individuals seeking entry into PhD programs in most subfields of psychology. It also serves the needs of students who wish to seek a terminal master's degree to advance in their professional careers.

PHD PREP OR BEHAVIORAL SCIENCE CAREERS

The Villanova MS in Psychology program enjoys a strong national reputation, contributing to the success of a large proportion of our graduates gaining admission to top PhD programs in many subfields in Psychology, Neuroscience, and other related fields. These programs include: Boston University, McGill University, Northwestern University, Purdue University, Syracuse University, University of Georgia, University of Houston, University of Kansas, University of Pittsburgh, University of Texas at Austin and UCLA.

Our program also serves the needs of individuals who seek a terminal master's degree to advance in their professional career. Recent graduates have pursued careers in behavioral and mental health, user experience, human resources, market research, finance, clinical research, speech pathology, occupational therapy, and research compliance.

RESEARCH-BASED CURRICULUM

The two-year curriculum provides excellent training in research skills. Students gain expertise in the formulation of research designs and in the acquisition, analysis and interpretation of data. Laboratory courses in cognitive psychology, statistics and biological psychology are complemented by electives in many of the other subfields of psychology. In addition, students may elect to take a graduate course in a department other than psychology to round out their area of special interest, such as biology, chemistry, computer science, human organization science or applied statistics.

Students are required to complete a total of eight courses, including statistics and at least two laboratory courses, and to conduct an original piece of research under faculty supervision in the form of a thesis. The elective courses allow students the flexibility to tailor the program to their particular goals. The master's thesis is required, and additional independent research is strongly encouraged. There is no comprehensive examination or foreign language requirement.

FACULTY

The Department is composed of core faculty members who maintain active research laboratories in their specialties. Strong research specializations within the department are provided in behavioral and cognitive neuroscience, comparative cognition, clinical, cognitive, developmental, organizational, perception, personality and social psychology. The psychology faculty has maintained a consistently strong record for productivity and scholarly research. Graduate students frequently co-author the research published by their mentors, thereby enhancing their graduate education and preparation for a top-quality doctoral program.

A number of our faculty hold or have held research grants from various government agencies (e.g., National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health) and private foundations. Similarly, a number of our faculty serve or have served in important editorial positions for top journals in the field.

FACULTY, CONTINUED

DR. REBECCA BRAND'S most recent work focuses on the role of basic psychological needs support in mother's perinatal well-being. She also studies infant social-cognitive development, including the impact of parental behavior and motor development.

DR. MICHAEL BROWN'S research is focused on understanding basic cognitive processes by studying the behavior of nonhuman animals. Most recently, this research has centered on spatial cognition, social cognition and decision processes in rats, bees and fish.

DR. DIEGO FERNANDEZ-DUQUE studies social cognition in healthy and clinical populations.

DR. SUZANNE GRAY explores the depths of attention, reasoning and communication in nonhuman animals (especially birds) using behavioral and computational methods. Her research advances theories regarding the biological underpinnings of cognition and behavior by integrating ecological and evolutionary differences across many species, and supports animal welfare and conservation efforts.

DR. JANETTE HERBERS studies risk and resilience in child development, seeking to understand how children adapt to adverse circumstances such as trauma, poverty and homelessness, and how self-regulation skills and positive parenting can support healthy development in contexts of risk.

DR. IRENE KAN uses behavioral and neuroscience approaches to examine the cognitive architecture and neural bases of human memory and how memory processes are impacted by healthy aging. In addition, she studies how demographic factors (e.g., age, race, socioeconomic status) are associated with sleep-related behaviors and beliefs and how individual differences in sleep profiles may be linked to memory functions.

DR. JOHN KURTZ studies issues and techniques related to psychological assessment and the diagnosis of mental disorders. His research is concerned with factors related to change versus stability in personality traits during adulthood and the use of informants in personality assessment.

DR. PATRICK MARKEY'S research centers on the development and expression of behavioral tendencies within a social environment. These tendencies encompass a spectrum of behaviors, ranging from relatively commonplace interpersonal interactions (e.g., acting warmly during an interaction) to critical real-life outcomes (e.g., aggression, homicides, 911 calls, divorce, mass shootings).

DR. MATTHEW MATELL is interested in the cognitive and neural mechanisms underlying the perception of time in the seconds to minutes range. While past work has primarily utilized rodent subjects, he is transitioning toward human studies, with an aim to utilize eye tracking and fNIRS cortical imaging as primary methods.

DR. ELIZABETH PANTESCO is a clinical health psychologist who studies the relationships among sleep, psychosocial attributes, and risk markers for cardiometabolic disease. Her projects focus on sociodemographic disparities in sleep and health, beliefs and behaviors related to short sleep, and mechanisms that may link disrupted sleep to increased blood pressure.

DR. BENJAMIN SACHS studies how genetic and environmental factors contribute to behavioral dysfunction using genetically engineered mice. His research combines pharmacological, behavioral and cellular/molecular techniques to examine the mechanisms leading to depression-, anxiety and compulsivity-like behaviors and excessive drug and alcohol consumption.

DR. ERICA SLOTTER'S research interests lie at the intersection of the self and social relationships. She studies how we think about who we are as individuals in the context of close interpersonal bonds. How do our self-views change—or stay the same—as a function of the experiences we have and motivations we possess in our close relationships? Conversely, how do our self-views influence how we think, feel, and behave in our relationships?

DR. JOE TOSCANO studies how human listeners recognize speech and understand spoken language. His lab uses cognitive neuroscience techniques, computational modeling and behavioral methods to address questions about hearing, speech perception, learning and development, and to study how these processes unfold in real time during language comprehension.

DR. DEENA WEISBERG investigates how children and adults learn science and how imagination can support scientific thinking. Her work explores how children and adults interact with fictional stories, why scientific reasoning is sometimes difficult, and how fantastical scenarios can bolster science learning.

DR. CAITLYN YANTIS is interested in how people think and talk about race, racism and diversity, with the goal of informing efforts to mitigate racial inequity and interracial tension. Her current research examines what makes White Americans' and racial minority group members feel supported and respected when talking with one another about racial issues.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO APPLY:

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